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DDI-2870-68

NSA Declassification/Release Instructions on File.

MEMORANDUM

NSA 25X1D6a

SUBJECT: Large-scale Soviet Military Exercise [REDACTED]

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1. [REDACTED] Soviet military authorities conducted the most extensive integrated test of their forces we have seen. Virtually all Soviet strategic forces, including submarines and heavy bombers, were involved.

[REDACTED]

2. We believe that the exercise was designed to test the Soviet capability to achieve centralized command and control of the various elements of their strategic forces in the simultaneous performance of several different missions. Although we do not know what objectives they may have had, the Soviets probably consider the exercise a success. In effect, they have demonstrated that, despite the increasing complexity of their strategic attack forces, they are keeping abreast of the problem of maintaining operational control of their attack forces.

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3. We expect the Soviets will conduct similar, possibly even more extensive, exercises of this type in the future. We do not regard these events as indicating any effort by the Soviets to prepare their strategic forces for specific use at a specific time. Rather, they are the kinds of exercises to be expected from time to time from an increasingly mature and capable strategic attack force. Exercises of this sort have, of course, a certain diplomatic utility in communicating to the West the latest stage in the evolution of Soviet strategic power, a fact the Soviets no doubt appreciate.